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ABSTRACT

This report identifies key policy issues and recommendations to improve educational, social, and cultural experiences for all black learners in Minnesota by the Minnesota Curriculum Task Force on Educating the Black Learner. Recommendations at the state level include the following: (1) establishment of a State Board of Education (SBE) committee to facilitate partnerships among black organizations to identify concerns of black learners; (2) encouragement of school and community collaboration for early childhood and parent education; (3) adoption of a multicultural gender-fair curriculum rule; (4) adoption of the Policy on Quality Integrated Education and the revision of the Policy Statement on Educational Leadership Roles for the Minnesota Department of Education and SBE in Providing Equal Educational Opportunity; (5) funding of scholarship programs for black students who pursue a career in education; (6) adoption of mastery testing at each elementary school grade level; and (7) requirement of more extensive race relations and sensitivity training for teacher certification. Recommendations for local districts focus on the following areas: (1) employee performance appraisal; (2) black parent advocates; (3) reflecting community racial diversity on district committees; (4) preparation of action plans for improvement based on current data about race; and (5) training for all school employees in cross-cultural communications. Additional data, including a 70-item bibliography, are given in 9 appendices. (SLD)

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MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

REPORT OF THE CURRICULUM TASK FORCE

ON

EDUCATING THE BLACK LEARNER

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June, 1988

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TASK FORCE
ON EDUCATING THE BLACK LEARNER

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM TASK FORCE
ON EDUCATING THE BLACK LEARNER

E XECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commitment to equity and educational excellence is a goal of the State Board and the Minnesota Department of Education. Both believe and endorse the two guiding principles that the task force supports for Black learners: that all students can learn and that all aspects of a child's social, emotional, psychological and cultural needs must be acknowledged and addressed if a child is to receive a quality education. The State Board of Education must ensure that all persons involved in the schooling process view the education of Black learners as important, and assist them in reaching their full potential. Following almost a year of study the task force has identified key policy issues and submits recommendations to improve educational, social, and cultural experiences of all Black learners in Minnesota.

These recommendations include both state and local policy considerations designed to increase the academic and social success of Black learners in Minnesota.

State Policy Recommendation

The Minnesota State Board of Education should:

- establish a SBE committee to facilitate a partnership between Black organizations in order to identify needs, issues, and concerns of Black learners;
- encourage cooperative and collaborative ventures between school and community for early childhood and parent education and training;
- mandate a multicultural gender fair curriculum rule;
- adopt the Policy On Quality Integrated Education and the revision of the Policy Statement On Educational Leadership Roles For The MDE And SBE In Providing Equal Educational Opportunity;
- fund scholarship program for Black students who pursue a career in education;
- require Assurance of Mastery "mastery testing" at each elementary grade level; and,
- require more extensive human race relations and race sensitivity training for teacher licensure certification process.

Local District Recommendations

Local school districts should:

- require performance appraisal of all employees to ensure and incorporate the responsibility to maintain an environment of acceptance and support for all students;
- promote and maintain a process through which Black parent advocates provide assistance to parents during conferences and meetings with school officials;
- require that membership on all district committees relating to curriculum, budget and personnel reflect the racial diversity of the community;
- review and analyze MINCRIS[1] and other data by race and report findings to SBE and MDE and provide an action plan that indicates improvement of the educational status of Black learners; and,
- require all school employees to have on-going training in crosscultural communications and race relations.

While the purpose of our work has been to assess and address the educational needs of Black learners, we believe that implementation of these recommendations will benefit all citizens of Minnesota.

[1] MINCRIS (Minnesota Civil Rights Information System)

INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Minnesota State Board of Education (SBE) with a set of recommendations to improve the educational, social and cultural experiences of all Black learners in Minnesota.

B. Background

National reports have been increasingly critical of public education. The increased public interest has resulted in some educational reforms focusing on equity and the education of minority and disadvantaged students. Much of this increased interest has been directed towards the target population of this task force's concern, i.e., education of Black learners.

Ron Edmonds, a well known, highly respected education researcher and proponent of school effectiveness said that public schools can teach all children. His research indicates that educators have the knowledge and skills to successfully teach minority and disadvantaged students. The dilemma is "whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far". National concern has been echoed on the state level. In April of 1986, the University of Minnesota's Hubert Humphrey Institute sponsored a conference on "Educating the Black Child". At that conference several strategies were discussed for improving the K-12 educational opportunities for Black learners in Minnesota.

In December 1986, the State Board of Education approved a motion to appoint a curriculum Task Force and directed Commissioner Randall to develop a plan and timelines for Task Force activities which would address the issues of educating the Black learner in Minnesota. The authorizing legislation specified that the Task Force include representatives of the eight congressional districts. Membership was balanced to represent urban, suburban and non-metropolitan districts, parents, students, educators, community representatives and business.

The Task Force was charged to:

1. Review and analyze SBE rules/initiatives that are addressing concerns of Black learners in the public schools and make appropriate recommendations.

2. Conduct informational meetings/sessions with the Black learners, their families and Black organizations to ascertain the needs of the Black learners and develop short and long range recommendations to meet those needs.

3. Assess the concerns of Black staff at all levels in the public schools and include these concerns in the development of final report to the SBE.

4. Facilitate meetings between Black organizations in the State and the SBE to promote an enduring partnership in the education of the Black learner.

The Black learner task force operating assumptions are:

1. That all students can learn, therefore, the current educational system must examine and implement more effective strategies and techniques to improve achievement of Black learners and continue to narrow the gap between Black and White student achievement.

2. That the educational system must be sensitive to the "whole child", therefore, all aspects of the child's social, emotional, psychological and cultural needs must be acknowledged and considered while providing a quality education.

3. The implementation of the Task Force's recommendations will ultimately benefit all learners regardless of background or circumstances.

C. Procedures

The Task Force met monthly beginning in September 1987 and ended in June 1988. In order to fulfill the SBE charge, the Task Force engaged in the following activities:

1. A public meeting with Dr. Gary Orfield on "The Black Learner: Educational and Policy Issue for Consideration";

2. Public meeting at Augsburg College on recruitment and retention of Blacks and other minority students attending post-secondary institutions in Minnesota;

3. Reviewed and analyzed current State Board rules and MDE initiatives that address the concerns of Black learners;

4. Site visitations to Duluth, Minneapolis, Rochester and St. Paul. Interviews with Black educators, students, parents, and community representatives were held;

5. Development of a questionnaire which requested information from several Black organizations within the metropolitan area concerning activities that support Black learners, key educational issues, and strategies for support of SBE initiatives;

6. Review of documents, reports, articles, research, and other materials on Black learners;

7. Meetings with data analysts in MDE and HECB to review student, staff and post-secondary data;

8. Meetings with Dr. Will Antell to review SBE Desegregation Policy Analysis and Desegregation Cost Analysis; and,

9. Meetings with Marilyn Jackson-Beech, Program Evaluation Division, Office of the Legislative Auditor, to discuss "curriculum variation in education opportunity study."

D. Task Force Findings

The Task Force findings have been organized into seven (7) categories; each category will be presented separately.

1. Protection from Physical, Verbal (or Non-Verbal) Abuse

Black Learners want and deserve an educational environment which is supportive and challenging. To provide such an environment, we must first assure their physical safety and freedom from racial and/or ethnic slurs; and create an environment in which all students are valued and treated with unconditional positive regard and respect.

During the Task Force meetings across the state, students, teachers and parents consistently reported the following problems:

- Racial name calling and other derogatory remarks about Black physical features, etc., were frequently encountered;
- Teachers/administrators lack training and support to handle racial conflict among students and staff;
- Some teachers display a lack of caring toward Black students (e.g., when Black students display inappropriate behavior some teachers ignore and let the behavior continue);
- There is a lack of fairness in treatment of Black students regarding:
  - discipline
  - low expectations
  - counseling service/assistance
  - encouragement

Some staff demonstrate a lack of sensitivity by referring to Blacks as "you people" during class discussion and activities; or failing to acknowledge Black contributions to our history and culture. The under representation of minority students in honors or advanced placement programs does not adequately reflect the Black student population.There is little support for the advocacy of Black students and parents. It is insufficient to suggest that the instances of physical and verbal abuse experienced by Black students simply reflect the typical inhumanity with which children occasionally treat one another. In the case of a Black student often confronted with challenges far greater than those faced by the majority student body, such affronts can be genuinely

debilitating. Protection of students from such abuse must be taken as the responsibility of every person in the school system -- from the bus driver to the custodian, to the teacher, to the counselor, to the principal, to the superintendent. No one should be allowed to stand idly by and witness incidents such as those which have been reported to members of this task force. Educators have a responsibility to both majority and minority students to confront such behavior. Our goal must be unconditional acceptance of everyone by teachers, support staff, principal, parents, and students who attend schools in Minnesota.

2. Unjust and Inequitable Treatment

Without wishing to pass judgment with regard to incidents about which we have only limited information, the Task Force wants the State Board of Education to understand that it has encountered numerous instances in which Black students have perceived themselves to have suffered unjust and inequitable treatment. For example, when a fight would break out between a Black and a majority student, the Black student would be suspended; while the majority student would not.

The possibility of inequitability in treatment is in part supported by one of the largest and most comprehensive needs assessment surveys ever conducted among Black families. The findings revealed that school suspension is much more prevalent among Blacks than is commonly believed.

> One-fourth (24%) of all Black parents said that at least one of their children had been suspended.
>
> 29% of all low income Black parents under $6,000 per year had children who had been suspended.
>
> 18% of all middle-income Black parents ($20,000 or more) had children who had been suspended from school.[2]

Cases were reported in which teachers would respond to a request for assistance from a majority student and deny that same request from a Black student. In other cases there seemed to be a clear presumption that the Black student was at fault. Here again, even the perception of such unequal treatment and negative expectations is damaging. Minority students (particularly males) are withdrawing from state high schools at a rate 11% higher than majority students. Some have literally given up on the system -- in part at least because they believe the system has given up on them. Our society can simply not afford to turn its back on either the needs or the potential contributions of these citizens.

[2] Billingsley. A., The Educational Needs of Black Children, working papers on meeting the Educational needs of Cultural Minorities, November 1980, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD

3. Expectations

Black students need and deserve the same high expectations which majority students face. Dr. Andrew Billingsley identifies major factors that must be taken into consideration if the education needs of Black children are to be met effectively.

> "Foremost is the fact that the overwhelming majority of Black parents, low income as well as middle income, have strong achievement goals for their children and contrary to popular belief, most Black children have high aspirations.
>
> Relatively lower scores of Black learners on standardized test (compared to white students) should not be attributed to lack of achievement orientation on the part of their parents or themselves."[3]

Research has revealed that disproportionate numbers of Black parents felt that the education needs of their children were not being met -- regardless of whether they were slow learners, gifted, physically or mentally handicapped. Thus, education services must be more sensitive to the heterogeneity of the Black student population.

In its discussions around the state, the Task Force was confronted with repeated concerns about:

- Negative peer pressure hindering some students from achieving and maximizing their potential;
- The paucity of and critical need for more Black classroom teachers;
- The lack of incorporation of Black history, culture, and contemporary Black contributions within all content areas K-12; and,
- The need for classes in helping students build positive self-esteem.

There is no surer way to perpetuate the racism of this society than to consign Black students to an inferior educational experience. Like all students, Black students need to be challenged and stretched. In the process of education, students acquire not only knowledge about the world in which they live but also knowledge about themselves. The self-image which students have is a crucial determinant of their future success and achievement. Regrettably, many well-intentioned people still believe that they are "doing a favor" for Black students when they counsel them into a less demanding math course or suggest that they avoid the rigors of a pre-collegiate curriculum.

Black students pay for such "favors" with adult lives consigned to less challenging, satisfying, and rewarding careers. More importantly, they come to doubt themselves and their own ability.

Many educators and organizations like the Children's Defense Fund

[3] IBID

have expressed concern for years "regarding the racial inequity related to the over-representation of Black children who are disciplinary problems in special education to the "mentally retarded".[4]

4. Home, School and Community Relations

It has long been understood that the successful education of students requires close and active cooperation between the home, school and the community. And yet, in our meetings with Black parents, they regularly expressed a sense of alienation and frustration. Too often, the schools had not effectively informed them regarding the education of their children nor the availability of support programs. They would learn too late that their child had needlessly been placed in a remedial course; or that the selection of courses had compromised the child's ability to pursue higher education; or that tutorial services were available or that their son or daughter could have participated in the Honors Program, etc. Here again, it is not the Task Force's purpose to indict the schools, but rather to say that special efforts must be made to bridge the gap between schools and Black families. Black parents are no less concerned about the education of their children than are majority parents. And yet, that concern needs to be harnessed into a strong, collaborative partnership through which the needs of Black students can be addressed.

A Black parent(s) involvement should be considered an integral part of the educational environment of Black learners. Parental participation on every level, from preschool vision screening volunteer to school board member will have a direct and measurable effect on children's academic achievement and skills mastery. Such positive correlation between parental involvement and increased academic achievement have been documented.[5]

Parents are the first of the human forces that affect learning and achievement. It has previously been emphasized that parents of Black learners have high expectations for their children and each Task Force visitation reinforced the concept that parents and Black learners themselves have high expectations. Most of the Black students interviewed have aspirations to attend college. All of the parents expected their children to complete high school and have some post-secondary learning experience.

How schools react to parental participation involvement will affect the student's attitude toward the learning environment. The task force visitations revealed several modes of parental participation, some formalized by local board policy with budgetary support, some informal, some using Black organizations, such as the Urban League and NAACP, as agents of involvement. The visitations also documented parental reluctance to become active advocates of their students due to fear of reprisal and negative consequences to the student. The task force provided a vehicle for expressing concerns without fear. The parents were universally pleased to have the opportunity to voice their desires and concerns about the education of their children.

[4] IBID

[5] Bureau of Educational Research, Educating Black Children: America's Challenge Howard University, Washington, D.C. 1987

The findings confirm the need to include parents of Black learners at every level; to document the extent of current Black parental involvement in public schools; and to develop innovative methods to attain increased Black parental involvement.

The community also plays a major role in the education of Black learners. The interviews from Black community representatives and questionnaire responses from Black organizations indicate perceptions that:

. The SBE is not always well informed regarding educational issues and concerns that impact the Black community and Black learners.;

. Cooperation and collaboration among home, school, community agencies and corporations must be strengthened in order to ensure the successful education of Black learner;

. Parent and community must become an integral part of the educational system in order to ensure equity and excellence for Black learners;

. The Black community needs increased and continuous information regarding SBE initiatives which have implications for Black learners in Minnesota; and,

. Educators must explore and internalize the concept of ethnic/ cultural diversity and apply this concept in their daily interaction, activities and teaching of Black learners.

Survey results from Black social and community organizations also revealed that they are currently providing leadership and assistance to Black learners and their families through:

. mentorship programs

. tutorial programs

. teenage pregnancy intervention programs

. parent training

. scholarships

. student leadership program

. conferences and workshops

. advocates for parents and students at schools, conferences, etc.

. cultural enrichment programs

5. Parent Education

Parent education and involvement can lead to a better understanding on the part of educators regarding the strengths of Black families in their community. Parent education and involvement can improve the ability of the family to provide more effective learning environments for their children, it can enable parents to influence their children's education in constructive ways.

Parent participation requires a level of sensitivity on the part of both parents and schools. Most innovative and successful programs for helping Black children learn the basics utilize approaches which directly involve parents in the teaching of their young children. The parent, child, and the teacher working together to increase the cognitive learning of young children results in the enhancement of the education of all three parties. Not only parents, but the total family of siblings and even the extended family.

Researchers have arranged schools on a continuum of school/neighborhood cooperation, from traditional attempts at outreach (asking parents to become passively and tangentially involved) to making provisions for active and sustained parent involvement to creating a feeling of community integration by providing school space for neighborhood use in addition to allowing parents to plan and monitor school activities. In schools with high percentages of Black students, the more vigorous the schools' efforts to involve parents and community, the greater the students success and achievement.

These same researchers found that community support, fundraising, attendance at school meetings, and the number of school functions involving community were all highly correlated with student achievement.

Techniques for Parent Training:

- emphasizing reading activities, such as asking parents to read at home to their children or to listen to them read

- learning through discussion, such as asking parents to watch and then discuss a special television program with their children

- communicating to parents ideas for family games or activities related to school work

- establishing contracts between teachers and parents, such as formal agreements for parents to supervise and assist children with homework

- assisting parents in developing teaching and evaluation skills

Many effective school educators and researchers believe that active parents and interested citizens are, in fact, important to stimulating staff enthusiasm, educational accountability, and strong school spirit characteristic of middle-class schools.

6. Staffing

Black students have the same requirements as majority students regarding positive role models. The absence of Black educators cannot help but diminish the self-image of Black students. There is a need to increase Black role models in schools through an increase in staff hires. Therefore, needs exist in Minnesota to ensure integration of Blacks in education on every level; and the ultilization of affirmative measures to achieve desired staffing of Black educators. It is very important that the State Board of Education ensure that existing laws relating to protected classes are enforced. The Minnesota State Legislature (S.F. No. 1769).

A critical need for role models in the educational setting was articulated by parents, students, and the Black professionals at every Task Force visitation. It is critical to the educational outcome of Black learners that all levels of the educational system reflect the diversity of the population. Until the staffing patterns are representative, current staff must be well trained in strategies and techniques that effectively increase achievement levels of Black learners, with special emphasis and training for teachers, counselors, and administrators.[6] Educational research gives credence to the importance of committed professionals. There is a need to develop a state-wide pool of Black educators. This pool can be established through various initiatives. (e.g. The State Board of Education, together with the Legislature, could develop incentives for Black students to enter careers in education.)

7. Curriculum

The focus of a curriculum should include what the teacher knows and how she/he transmits knowledge and information to learners to ensure that all students learn and strive towards maximizing their potential. Teachers therefore, must acquire knowledge, skills, and appreciation about multiple cultural groups and learning styles if they are to be successful when teaching learners representing diverse cultural backgrounds. The culturally relevant experiences, languages and belief systems must be valued and incorporated into the educational system if Black students are to become more academically prepared.

Since the homes are too often, unequal environment for students, the school becomes the equalizing factor for students in learning academic and social skills. Socio-economic and family structures cannot be used as an excuse for not educating Black learners.

Dr. Charles Moody in his article states that no child enters Kindergarten wanting to fail.[7] According to M. Carl Holman, the miseducation of Black children begins very early. "We know that Black children are closest to their white peers in their earliest years and that, given half a chance, these children are eager and responsive learners. But we also know that the learning gap widens in every year after Kindergarten."[8]

6.IBID.
[7] IBID
[8] IBID

Alvin Poussaint found that Black students are behind white students in achievement by grade four and this difference in achievement for most Black students is never made up. Not even by those who attend college. Poussaint concludes that "The roots of failure take hold long before thousands of minority youngsters have dropped out or have been pushed out of high school, or emerge with virtually worth-less certificates or diplomas."[9]

If Black learners are to be successful in academic and social skills the current curriculum must be modified to be more inclusive of Black cultural experiences, and learning styles which impact the learner prior to entering the public educational system. Multicultural education encompasses a philosophy that promotes knowledge, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. It also emphasizes the integration of Black Americans and other groups of color into all subject areas in the K-12 curriculum.

Another important aspect of curriculum is student assessment. On-going assessment of student progress is key if the academic achievement of Black learners is to improve. Once Black students have been assessed for areas of improvement, instructional programs must be developed and implemented. Then teachers must be held accountable for the improvement of academic skills for Black learners.

Findings from interviews with Black educators, students and parents indicated a need for the re-direction of curriculum instruction and assessment. A sample of their comments which accentuate this need are:

- Black students have little knowledge or awareness about Black culture, history, and contemporary issues;
- there is a need for on-going staff development training in effective teaching strategies and techniques;
- all teachers should be required to take extensive on-going training in student learning styles, human relations, cross cultural communications effective teaching strategies/techniques,and multicultural education;
- schools must ensure the integration of the historical, cultural, philosophical and social experiences of Black Americans;
- the current educational institution supports a distorted image of Blacks as workers rather than learners;
- there is a need to design a curriculum that brings forth a new set of assumptions, expectations and challenges for Black learners so they can become positive change agents within society;

[9] IBID

. teacher strategies and techniques must analyze how Black children learn, then create the appropriate learning environment which would create success (i.e., experience related, value based concrete association with Black cultural values);

. the learning environment must be integrated, active, and participating for Black students;

. as districts consider competency testing, the main goal should be towards the improvement of student achievement rather than data collection;

. build in strong teacher accountability, i.e., fall/spring testing to ensure the growth of each student;

. currently tests are used to identify student deficiency but there are no consequences for teachers, i. e., accountability for improvement of student achievement;

. minimum standards should not be the ultimate goal for any testing program, since it lowers expectations for teachers and students;

. Assurance of Mastery should be expanded to all grades at the elementary level; and,

. testing assessment programs should indicate the relationship between class-room instruction and competency testing (i.e., teaching skills, strategies, techniques, etc.).

Crosscultural communications skills and teachers expectations are two powerful aspects of curriculum that predict the success or failure for Black learners. According to Dr. Orlando Taylor "students with different cultural norms are at risk if teachers have little knowledge, sensitivity or appreciation of the diversity in communication styles."[10]

[10] Taylor, Orlando, L Ph.D., Crosscultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education. Howard University, School of Communications, 1988

There is a dual conflict in communication styles between Black culture and school culture. Dr. Shirl Gilbert states that:

> "When Black students are challenged to demonstrate their achievement in written form, they must first engage in a process of translation from an oral expressive mode to the written form before they can begin the actual task. This shifting of expressive styles takes time away from the task itself. When speaking and writing in class, Black youngsters must also edit dramatics out of their presentations in order to make them more congruent with the expectations of the school. Otherwise, teachers may find Black expressive styles distracting and obtrusive, and Black students will receive negative feedback or find their entire communication rejected."[11]

Often the problem lies not with the Black learner but in the relationship between the learner and the teacher. Children develop inner maps of the social world, and of their future places as adults in it. These maps become powerful determinants of their aspirations and self-image. Self-concept, an individual's conception of self-worth, identity and abilities, can be positive or negative. Marva Collins states that a teacher's assessment of a child is based on that teacher's life experience. "That means that certain children trigger a positive or negative reaction because of the teacher's past, a reaction having little to do with the children's abilities or personalities."[12]

The breakdown in crosscultural communication and teacher expectations for Black learners results in high dropout, failure and credit loss, excessive placements in special education, reduced placement in gifted and talented programs and high suspension rates.

The interviews of Black educators, parents and students indicated that:

- all professional staff must be qualified and prepared to work with all students and believe that all students can learn;
- many Black students are not recognized by some teachers when they respond correctly;
- due to lack of teacher sensitivity, some Black parents feel they must become aggressive and demand that teachers respond appropriately to their child(ren)'s needs;
- attitudes and expectations of non-Black staff are ofttimes low for Black students;

[11] Gilbert, Shirl E. Ph.D., Improving The Success In Schools Of Poor Black Children, Phi Delta Kappa, October 1985

[12] Collins, Marva and Tamarkin, Civia, Marva Collins' Way, Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, 1982

. many parents cannot or do not have the where-with-all to get teachers to respond to their child(ren)'s needs;

. many teachers are failing students, by not helping them to become an integral part of learning environment;

. many parents who entrust the school system to take care of their children are unaware of teacher's low expectations and disregard for single parent and poor families;

. teachers must develop a positive regard for all students regardless of race ethnicity or social class;

. many Black students need to be nurtured and motivated;

. there is dual system of treatment towards Black students;

. many Black students with behavior problems have academic ability but ofttimes are not academically challenged;

. there is disproportionate representation and placement of Black students (especially males) in many special education programs;

. Black students are in dire need of caring teachers who can help them develop positive self-esteem and increase their potential for academic achievement;

. districts should develop positive self-esteem classes for Black students that would promote positive peer pressure for success and achievement rather than failure and dropout; and,

. districts should study program models that have demonstrated improvement and success in Black academic achievement and institutionalize district-wide.

If teachers are to be successful at teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds they must have high expectations, use culturally appropriate assessment procedures, and be trained and skilled in multiple learning strategies and techniques.

Piaget noted "instructors teach their subjects, but teachers understand how children learn." As Black learners move through the educational system less concern is allocated to the student and more attention is given to the subject matter. Many teachers teach the way they were taught as children; as college students, or the way they like to learn. They teach with the attitude "I got mine and you get yours."[13]

[13] Kunjufu, Jawanza, Countering The Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys, Vol. I & II. African American Images, Chicago, IL 1986

This attitude results in educational deficits for Black learners. According to Dr. Charles Moody "educational deficits are cumulative. In fact, for some students, the longer they stay in school, the further behind they become. Levels of education attainment have improved, but many Black students who remain in school find themselves tracked into less challenging curricular opportunities that do not prepare them for the jobs of the future. Uninspiring drill and practice workbooks and ditto sheets do not help to close the 'achievement gap'. Teachers found to be most effective with Black children incorporated Black students' experiences and interests into the instruction, and allowed them to foster cooperative efforts and use materials that incorporated cultural characteristics."[14]

Effective teachers must demonstrate a belief that "all children can learn." In order to accomplish this they must begin to re-examine their own value system. Jawanza Kunjufu states that: "You cannot teach a child you do not love. You cannot teach a child who you do not respect. You cannot teach a child who you do not understand. You cannot teach a child whom you are afraid of. You cannot teach a child if your 'political baggage', i.e., sexism and racism, is brought into the classroom. (How many teachers do you know who have the ability to keep their past experiences about racism and sexism outside the door?) You cannot teach a child without bonding first, which results from love, respect, and understanding."[15]

It is in the classroom where parents and students expect "delivery" to take place and, when it does not, the system fails for everyone involved. An effective teacher must assume responsibility to motivate all learners, she/he must create a desire for learning. A teacher must help the learner understand and appreciate why it is important to learn. Finally, an effective teacher must make each learner feel worthwhile and confident.

Dr. Shirl E. Gilbert in his research on improving the success for Black children states that "Teachers need to understand their own and their Black students' cultural attitudes, values and behaviors that impinge directly on the instructional process. Once they have achieved this understanding, they can then modify some of the procedures for teaching and learning to better accommodate Black cultural styles. This notion of changing school climate is consistent with the research on school effectiveness that found that schoolwide changes are needed to improve students' academic success, but it in no way compromises the emphasis on high academic expectations for Black students."[16]

[14] Bureau of Educational Research, Educating Black Children, America's Challenge, School of Education, Howard University, Washington, D.C. 1987

[15] Kunjufu, Jawanza, Countering The Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys, Vol. I & II, African American Images, Chicago, IL 1986

[16] Gilbert, Shirl E. Ph.D., Improving The Success In Schools Of Poor Black Children, Phi Delta Kappa, October 1985

The task force examined several instructional models and concluded that a successful instructional model for Black learners must :

. have high expectations of Black students and demonstrate strategies and techniques for implementation;

. insure the Black perspective be considered and integrated in all instructional planning and implementation;

. provide a strong classroom management system which provides multiple teaching strategies/techniques for social skills;

. provide instructional strategies in English proficiency for Black learners; and

. provide test-wiseness strategies for teachers and students.

In order to prevent failure educators cannot write children off as helpless casualties. Well researched instructional methods, strategies and tools are now plentiful and should be utilized by districts. Along with effective teaching tools districts must be cognizant of the need for hiring caring teachers who will help students develop a sense of personal responsibility, self esteem and success.

E. Recommendations

Recommendations will be presented under two headings (1) State Policy (2) Local District.

1. State Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 1.1

The task force recommends that the SBE establish a permanent committee/task force or advisory council which would facilitate a partnership following:

a. Ongoing dialogue between the SBE and Black organizations to address needs, issues, concerns of Black learners.

b. Lobbying support for legislative funding for early childhood and parent education/training programs.

c. Developing cooperative and collaborative ventures for school/community partnerships and for corporate ventures in the area of teacher training and on-going professional development.

d. Monitoring of and support for the implementation of the task force recommendations.

Recommendation 1.2

The task force recommends and supports the SBE mandate for developing and implementing multicultural gender fair curriculum in every district.

The rule should ensure that: 1) the PER legislation be inclusive of multicultural gender fair curriculum concepts and approaches and implementation process; 2)staff development training at the local district requires multicultural gender fair education concepts, training in crosscultural communication, black learning styles, cooperative learning, effective teaching techniques, and fair discipline strategies. The training should be on-going and updated as new trends develop.

Recommendation 1.3

The task force recommends that the SBE adopt the Policy On Quality Integrated Education and the revision of the Policy Statement On Educational Leadership Roles For MDE And SBE In Providing Equal Educational Opportunity which were developed for the Desegregation Policy Analysis in December 1987.

Recommendation 1.4

The task force recommends that the SBE lobby the legislature to enact a program whereby Black students who intend to pursue careers in education in Minnesota would be given full scholarships or grants at public universities in the state of Minnesota. These scholarships or grants would require at least four years of service as a teacher in Minnesota.

Recommendation 1.5

The task force recommends that the SBE lobby the legislature to modify the Assurance of Mastery legislation to provide annual "mastery testing" at the elementary level in districts that are cities of the first class. This would ensure that Black learners and other students of color would be provided:

a. monitoring of grade level mastery from year to year

b. developing effective remediation plans for learners i.e., individual remediation plans (IRP's)

c. require that pupil performance of Assurance of Mastery results be incorporated as a criteria for teacher evaluation

d. require that this program be funded based on pupil participation

Recommendation 1.6

The task force recommends that the SBE should lobby the Teaching Licensure Board to revise current human relations guidelines and include guidelines for race sensitivity for both new and renewal certification. It should be inclusive of the following:

- multicultural gender fair education concepts
- standards for student-teachers having experience working with diverse student populations
- courses/training in cross-cultural communication, Black learning styles, cooperative learning, and effective teaching
- courses in classroom management and fair discipline

2. Local District Recommendations

Recommendation 2.1

The task force recommends that the SBE encourage local districts to review and require that performance appraisal of all school employees ensure and incorporate the responsibility to maintain an environment of acceptance and support of all students.

Recommendation 2.2

The task force recommends that the SBE encourage local school districts to promote and maintain a process through which Black parent advocates provide assistance to parents/and learners in appropriate choices in course offerings, educational support, program and post-secondary institutions; and advocacy for parents at conferences and other meetings with school officials.

Recommendation 2.3

The task force recommends that the SBE encourage local districts to require that membership on all district committees relating to curriculum, budget and personnel reflect the racial diversity of its student enrollment.

Recommendation 2.4

The task force recommends that the SBE encourages local districts to review and analyze data collected by Minnesota Civil Rights Information System (MINCRIS) and other agencies by race in order to provide an implementation plan that details improvement of the educational status of Black learners and report their findings to SBE and MDE.

Recommendation 2.5

The task force recommends that the SBE encourage local districts to require all school employees to have on-going training in cross-cultural communications and race relations.

F. Concluding Remarks

The task force with the completion of this report has fulfilled the charge given by the SBE. We would like to take this opportunity to express our continual support of SBE initiatives for Black learners.

We commend the SBE for being visionary and courageous in requesting this forum of discussion and review of the status of Black learners in Minnesota.

There are many challenges ahead, but we know with the SBE and MDE continued support and commitment, improvements will come.

As the SBE considers the task force recommendations, we ask that you keep in mind the leadership roles of the SBE and ensure that all persons involved in the schooling process view the education of Black learners as important. Education cannot be used as a means of sorting and sifting students, but as a tool to assist them in reaching their full potential.

Finally, the task force concludes with this challenge to the State Board of Education as you continue to address the needs of Black learners:

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us.

We already know more than we need to do that.

Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.

-Ron Edmonds

APPENDICES

Definitions

Black Learner : All learners of Afro-American ancestry

Curriculum : The sum total of all supervised learning experiences of the school, whether in class or out of class, on school campus or off school campus.

HECB : Higher Education Coordinating Board

Human Forces : Parents, students, professional staff, teachers, support staff, counselors, administrators, para-professionals.

MINCRIS : Minnesota Civil Rights Information System

MDE : Minnesota Department of Education

Multicultural Curriculum: Curriculum that is taught from the perspectives and values of all groups. It fosters respect and appreciation for cultural diversity. It is integrated into every subject, uses materials that reflect all racial and cultural groups and eliminates stereotypes and biases. It validates and celebrates the uniqueness of every individual inclusive of race, gender and/or handicap.

SBE : State Board of Education

Student Support : All those human forces that affect achievement and assist learners in being successful in achieving their maximum educational, social, emotional and physical potential.

Appendix Two

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SAMPLE

SBE CURRICULUM TASK FORCE ON EDUCATING THE BLACK LEARNER

St. Paul Interview Questions (Educators/Parents/Community)

I. As a Black educator/parent/community representative, what should the educational system do to (address) the hurting needs of Black learners in St. Paul?

Some suggested issues:

- dropout rates
- teacher expectations
- early interaction between parents and school
- problems by low income families
- curriculum (student learning styles)
- student achievement
- dilemma of Black males (suspension, discipline, achievement)
- other

II. As a Black parent/community representative what are the obstacles that inhibit Black learners in St. Paul?

Some suggested issues:

- dropout rates
- teacher expectations
- early interaction between parent and school
- problems associated with low income parents
- curriculum, i.e., (multicultural gender fair)
- student achievement
- dilemma of Black males (suspension, discipline, achievement)
- counseling
- other

Minnesota Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM

To : All Twin Cities Black Organizations

Date: April 18, 1988

From : Mae Gaskins M. G.
Stephen Weber S. W.
Co-Chairs of SBE
Task Force on Educating the Black Learner

Cynthia Kelly C. Kelly
Task Force Staff Liaison
Education Specialist
Minnesota Department of Education

Subject: **State Board of Education Black Learner Task Force Questionnaire**

The State Board of Education has appointed a task force on educating the Black learner.

One aspect of their charge is to gather information on Black learners from Black organizations and identify ways to promote a partnership between organizations and the State Board of Education.

The task force has developed the attached questionnaire to assist them in gathering information in the fulfillment of their charge. We are requesting your organization's cooperation in this endeavor.

We value your leadership, and encourage you to utilize this forum as a means to share your concerns regarding the education of Black learners.

We are asking that you identify someone to complete and return the questionnaire by **May 20, 1988**. A return envelope is enclosed.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Cynthia Kelly, staff liaison, at (612)296-5147.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

jm
enclosure

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
BLACK LEARNER TASK FORCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: Please answer each question based on your organizations perspective or level of involvement.

1. What are the key issues which should be considered by the State Board of Education regarding the education of Black learners in Minnesota?

2. What are some specific activities or programs that your organization is currently sponsoring to help Black learners? (i.e., tutors, scholarships, mentorships, drug awareness, intervention speakers, etc.)

(over)

3. In what ways can your organization assist the State Board of Education towards the improvement of the educational experience for Black learners?

4. What are some policy issues and/or mandates regarding the educational experience of Black learners that the State Board of Education should consider?

Organization Name: _____

Completed by : _____
Name Title

Date : _____

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please return questionnaire in the self addressed envelope attached by May 20, 1988.

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The State Board of Education reaffirmes in 1988 its' commitment to quality integrated education, with the adoption of the following policy.

PROPOSED POLICY ON INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Education in the State of Minnesota, when provided the opportunity, should be integrated education. It is essential for the survival of an open, democratic society.

In quality integrated education the social and emotional development of the student is incorporated into learning academic and vocational skills. Integrated education is the sharing of a self-affirming educational experience with pupils and school personnel from a variety of cultural, religious, social, and economic backgrounds. The curriculum and supportive materials must evolve from, and relate to, the experience of the diverse community. It must include mastering the basic skills on which all subsequent learning is predicated.

To this end, the State Board of Education directs school districts to implement new programs and to reconstruct established curricula whenever possible to achieve integrated education. These programs require that in all the courses of study; art, music, vocational, literature, science, history, etc., schools will draw on the contributions of all racial, religious, social, and cultural groups so that all students realize that civilization is the product of many. The studies and activities in which the student engages must emphasize the individual student so that each develops a confidence and understanding of oneself and an appreciation for others.

Proposed Revision

STATE OF MINNESOTA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND BOARD OF EDUCATION
IN PROVIDING EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Minnesota State Board of Education and the Minnesota Department of Education are committed to the constitutional mandate of providing equal educational opportunities to all students in the public schools of Minnesota. Inequities in educational opportunity are multi-dimensional and to overcome them the resources of local, state and federal agencies must be developed and coordinated. Racial prejudice and class separation, basic causes of educational inequities, are no less pronounced in our school systems than elsewhere in our society. No challenge is more urgent to the leadership role of the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education than the necessity of assuring the fullest possible education for all students, regardless of their racial, cultural or socio-economic backgrounds. The State Board of Education and the State Department of Education propose to develop new policies and new designs of a program for equal educational opportunity for all students commensurate with today's challenges.

Public education must be philosophically committed to the respect for cultural and racial plurality as a significant value in our American way of life. Such a commitment in theory must be accompanied by an even greater commitment in practice. The respect and appreciation for pluralistic diversity, which ~~our~~ cultural and racial groups represent ~~is not emerging~~. within the United States, is not emerging.

Our society will not survive unless it can adapt to change. Nor can any element in our society hope to survive alone. Therefore, it is imperative that state and local education agencies recognize and accept their responsibility as potent change agents. Schools must create an atmosphere for learning which is devoid

of all prejudice, discrimination and separatism. Knowledge of the complex causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination must supplant existing myths and misconceptions. The stability of our nation depends, in large measure, on the understanding and respect which is derived from a common educational experience among diverse racial and/or socio-economic groups.

Recognizing that propitious changes must occur in the relationships of man to all human man if the destiny contemplated in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of this nation is ever to be attained, the State Board of Education directs the State Department of Education to assume greater leadership in the following areas bearing upon the intertwined themes of equal educational opportunity and improved human cross-cultural relations:

a. ~~Curriculum-provision~~ Multicultural, gender-fair curriculum provision
b. Instructional materials
c. Teacher training
d. School administration
e. Legislative proposals

~~Curriculum-provisions~~ Multicultural, gender-fair curriculum provisions must be made at all levels and through all disciplines including the sciences and the humanities, for satisfactory experiences in working with and learning about people of all cultural and racial groups. Social studies must exercise a vital leadership role. Students need to analyze today's current problems and their possible solutions. Curriculum materials must be presented in a realistic, objective manner without any attempt at distortion and/or ommission. Emphasis should be placed on the pattern of participation of all ~~ethnic~~ racial

cultural groups and not primarily on the contributions of individuals whose ~~ethnic~~ racial identity may have been irrelevant to their achievement. In most cases this should be done as an integral part of the studies rather than as a separate but parallel course. Whenever specific situations and circumstances warrant, electives may need to be initiated.

Suitable **instructional materials** must be provided for our teachers. Publishing companies must be kept apprised of current, pressing needs and must ~~redouble~~ increase their efforts to meet these demands. The ~~State~~ Minnesota Department of Education will assume an active leadership role in the preparation of guidelines for the selection of ~~curriculum-materials-in-minority-heritage~~ multicultural, gender-fair curriculum materials. In every instance, materials will be sought which will enlighten and not further omit, clarify and not further obscure.

Since racial and cultural prejudice is determined and perpetuated by complex interactions of social and psychological factors, eliminating prejudice requires a variety of interrelated approaches in education. The purpose of any program to reduce racial and cultural hostilities is to dissolve the barriers which prevent contacts between members of various groups. Any organization whose stated goal is to reduce racial hostility must work for and support **structural** and educational changes which provide for ~~contact~~ interaction among ~~groups~~ all groups.

Teachers must be closely attuned to the changing character of society and must learn to "think anew" and "act anew". Any effective approach to teaching and the understanding of people must begin with an intensive, realistic analysis of teachers' stereotypic ideas and misconceptions. Teachers must be fully knowledgeable about

the varying roles currently being demonstrated by groups; likewise, they must perceive clearly the constructive impact of dissent. They must become staunch believers in the potential strength to be derived from an American society composed of varying ethnic, racial and cultural groups. Teachers must also become deeply aware of their own feelings and master the skill of feeling what others feel. They must understand all children, empathize with their ambitions, and accept their various behavior aptterns.

It is crucial that teachers receive careful preparation in comprehensive, well-coordinated programs of both pre-service and in-service education. The ~~State~~ Minnesota Department of Education must take a decisive lead in providing rich learning opportunities for teachers to acquire new insights; extend and expand their knowledge and appreciation of others; eliminate their own strong prejudgments and generalizations about ~~minorities~~ racial groups; increase their sensitivity to other ~~people~~ cultural groups, and develop new strategies for creating a viable climate in which a change of attitudes, feelings, and understanding is ~~entirely possible~~ accomplished.

School administrators have the power to establish positive attitude changes through executive policies and decisions. Clear-cut, positive administrative decisions must embody the concept of preparation of the student for a ~~multi-racial~~ pluralistic society. Areas in which school administrators can and do exert control are: sensitizing local school board members; drawing school boundaries; selecting school sites, recruiting, hiring, assigning and promoting personnel; selecting curricula and books; conducting in-service training; and contracting for services. Such areas which school administrators do control can be used for developing positive ~~inter-racial~~ cross-cultural attitudes.

The State Board of Education recognizes that **legislation** which changes the socio-cultural structure in favor of increasing opportunities for equal status contacts helps to reduce racial and ~~ethnic~~ cultural prejudices. Legislation eliminating de-jure or de-facto segregation exemplifies efforts which can restructure the social environment and permit increased contact with members of racial and ~~ethnic~~ cultural groups.

Physical proximity permits personal knowledge and experience of others. It is therefore necessary for reducing racial prejudice but proximity alone is not always possible nor sufficient and can only be considered a first, crucial step. School desegregation/integration must be viewed as a process of developing positive attitudes between members of ~~majority-and-minority~~ all racial groups.

Improving race relations will depend largely upon the educational progress of our schools in developing positive attitudes. The heart of such educational processes will not only be the concept of racial and cultural pluralism but also the experience of it. This concept recognizes that differences, whether they be defined in terms of race, class, ~~ethnicity~~, culture or personality, be recognized, appreciated and accepted, **not** eliminated. Eliminating or not providing for differences is an open manifestation of hostility.

With the accelerated rate of change in society, with increased inquiry into the origins of social skills, and with increased alienation of many segments of the population, the public educational system must be recognized as the focus for changing attitudes. The public school offers an opportunity for changes to occur because it is an institution which permits the development of positive attitudes between individuals at a time in their lives when they are not thoroughly inculcated with preconcep-

tions and misconceptions of generations which have preceded them. The public school must be a positive intervening agent in the life of an individual and present a meaningful code of attitudes and behavior. The public school with its commitment to communicating the ideals of American democracy has an established historical and philosophical precedent for developing positive ~~human~~ cross-cultural-relations. The public schools must plan and work under this unwritten mandate from our general society that students be prepared to contribute toward the building of a cohesive ~~society~~ and pluralistic society. Operating from this philosophic vantage point, the State Board of Education directs the following recommendations to the leadership and staff of the Minnesota Department of Education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO ESTABLISH STATE-WIDE POLICY:

1. The Minnesota State Board of Education restates its commitment to integration in Minnesota schools and reinforces this commitment by supporting new ~~curricular~~ multicultural, gender-fair educational programs about and for racial and cultural ~~minorities~~ groups.

2. The Minnesota State Board of Education directs all divisions of the ~~State~~ Minnesota Department of Education to review federally funded project proposals to assure that racial and cultural ~~minorities~~ group programs receive high priority that:

   a. improve student achievement and performance;

   b. increase positive cross-cultural communication and interaction;

   c. provide equitable/fair discipline policies, procedures, and practices;

   d. student leadership and critical thinking skills.

3. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall conduct workshops and seminars to discuss this policy with local board of education, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other representatives of community groups.

The purpose of these sessions will be to promote understandings of the needs and responsibilities for developing ~~curricular-programs.~~ multicultural, gender-fair educational programs.

TO TRANSLATE STATE-WIDE POLICY TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES:

1. The Minnesota State Board of Education shall develop and disseminate guidelines and ~~minority-heritage~~ resource materials to be used in programs in kinder- multicultural, gender-fair curriculum garden through high school classes in ~~the~~ all schools throughout the State.
2. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall seek legislatively appropriated funds to:
   a. establish pilot projects in each region of the State to develop and test innovative learning experiences and teaching strategies that promote multicultural, gender-fair educational programs ~~may~~ be ~~duplicated~~ to replicated in other parts of Minnesota;
   b. develop new instructional ~~audio-visual~~ multimedia programs ~~about-the-life-and history-of-minorities.~~ promoting multicultural gender-fair curriculum materials.

TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES:

1. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall develop criteria to be used to evaluate and select instructional materials capable of improving ~~human~~ cross-cultural relations.
2. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall review periodic reports from local school systems to insure that these criteria are being used and met.
3. The Minnesota Department of Education shall exercise leadership in this area of study by working with publishing and film-making companies and informing them of the criteria used to select instructional materials.
4. The ~~State~~ Department of Education shall seek legislation to: continue and Minnesota expand upon ~~the-human-relations~~ training program currently provided for cross-cultural

teachers; provide transportation aids for all students living more than one mile from their assigned school; install pilot projects to test innovative/cross-cultural learning experience and teaching strategies; encourage the development of ~~inter-cultural~~ multicultural, gender-fair education centers; provide incentive grants for school districts engaged in ~~desegregation~~ desegregation/integration efforts.

TO EQUIP AND SUPPORT TEACHERS TO FOLLOW THIS POLICY:

1. The Minnesota State Board of Education urges ~~the Professions Development Section of~~ the ~~State~~ Minnesota Department of Education to translate these recommendations into activities broadening college and university teacher education programs.
2. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall work with state colleges and universities to train teachers and administrators to meet the special requirements of racial and cultural ~~minorities~~ group programs.
3. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education, cooperatively with local educational agencies, shall develop and implement plans for broad and intensive in-service training programs in ~~inter-group~~ cross-cultural relations which place special emphasis on deeper understanding of self and others and that are directed toward positive attitudinal and behavioral changes of administrators, teachers, and students.
4. ~~The Minnesota State Department of Education shall develop regulations requiring programs and courses in human relations that provide an understanding of cultural and racial groups prior to teacher certification.~~

TO INSURE THAT THIS POLICY BECOMES PRACTICE:

1. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall encourage local educational

agencies to develop and further implement voluntary, cooperative plans and procedures for ~~desegregation~~ continuing integration of staff and students.

2. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall perfect guidelines for the use of federal and state funds to assure that discriminatory practices are not used in employing personnel, selecting materials, and determining school populations.

3. The Minnesota ~~State~~ Department of Education shall assign a staff liaison officer to assist the State Legislature in developing and improving programs affecting racial and cultural ~~minorities~~ groups.

4. The Minnesota State Board of Education directs the Commissioner of Education to implement these recommendations and to submit to the Board an annual report concerning state-wide activities in ~~racial-and-cultural-minority~~ multicultural, gender-fair education programs.

The Minnesota State Board of Education pledges its continued leadership to provide programs and resources necessary for equal educational opportunity ~~for-all-students~~ and equity for all Minnesota students.

The State Board of Education's Task Force spent a year identifying key issues relating to the educational experiences of Black learners. During this process we sought to identify pertinent information on the educational status of Black students in Minnesota public schools. While there is very little hard data available to document their status we can define some trends using Minnesota Civil Rights information. The State Department was very helpful in providing MINCRIS information on student enrollment and dropout data for the State. A review of enrollment from 1980-86 provides us with the following information:

- student enrollment has dropped during the years 1980-84
- the drop can be attributed to a decline of majority enrollment
- minority enrollment has continued to increase during the same period
- tables 1-4 indicate that the decline of majority enrollment was not mirrored by the minority groups and, in fact, Black and Asian populations constituted the greatest increase

In addition to enrollment information a review of dropout percentages by race seems to indicate that, on the whole, minorities continue to experience a higher percentage of dropouts than their counterparts. Dropout information for the State ranges from a low of 2.1% in 1982-83 to a high of 2.9% in 1986-87. When we review dropout rates by race we find a low of 1.8% for White in 1982-83, and a high of 2.5% in 1986-87. This is in contrast to a low of 9.3% for Black in 1985-86 to a high of 12% in 1981-82.

This situation is not unlike the findings of the report by the Commission On Minority Participation In Education And American Life entitled "One-Third Of A Nation".

> "America is moving backwards--not forward--in its efforts to achieve the full participation of minority citizens in the life and prosperity of the nation.
>
> In education, employment, income, health, longevity, and other basic measures of individual and social well-being, gaps persist--and in some cases are widening--between members of minority groups and the majority population."

While Minnesota can take pride in its overall low dropout rates for students (perhaps the best in the nation), it should not ignore the continued differences between its majority and minority students. We must make a concerted effort to decrease the minority dropout rate in our state.

As we review Black student data in Minnesota we note that Minneapolis and St. Paul School Districts make up 78% of the grades 7-12 Black population. In comparison, they account for 91.5% of the 1985-86 and 92.5% of the 1986-87 Black dropouts in the State. This would indicate that if we could resolve the problem in these two large school districts it would significantly improve the status of Black students.

The information presented here is not new data. In fact, we have been aware of these facts for some time. What remains to be seen is what we will do to rectify the issues presented in this report.

Table
1

MINNESOTA ENROLLMENT
1980-1987

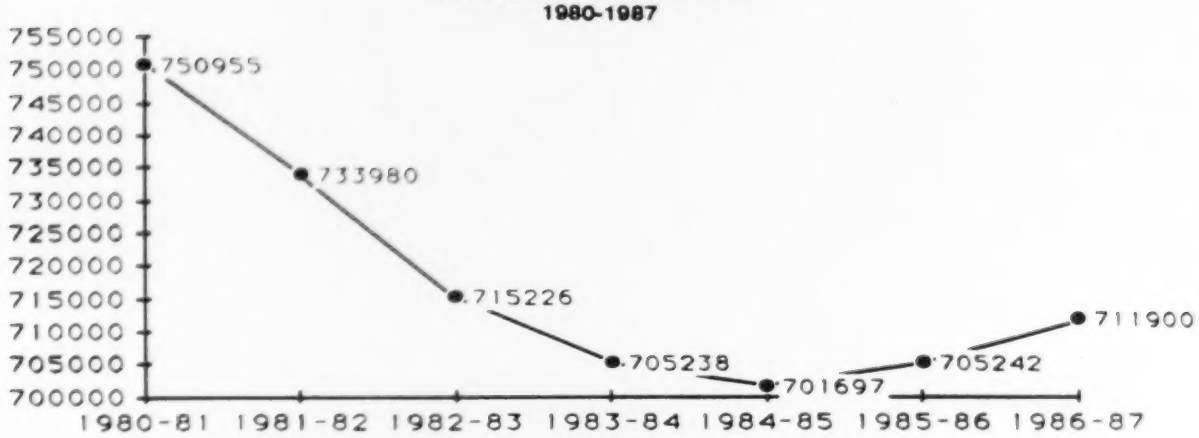


Table 2

MAJORITY ENROLLMENT
1980-1986

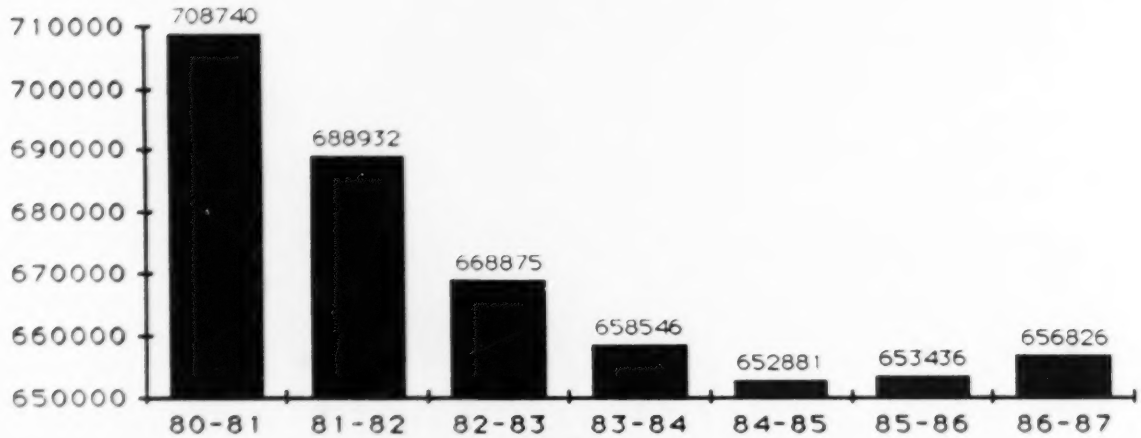


Table 3

MINORITY ENROLLMENT
1980-1986

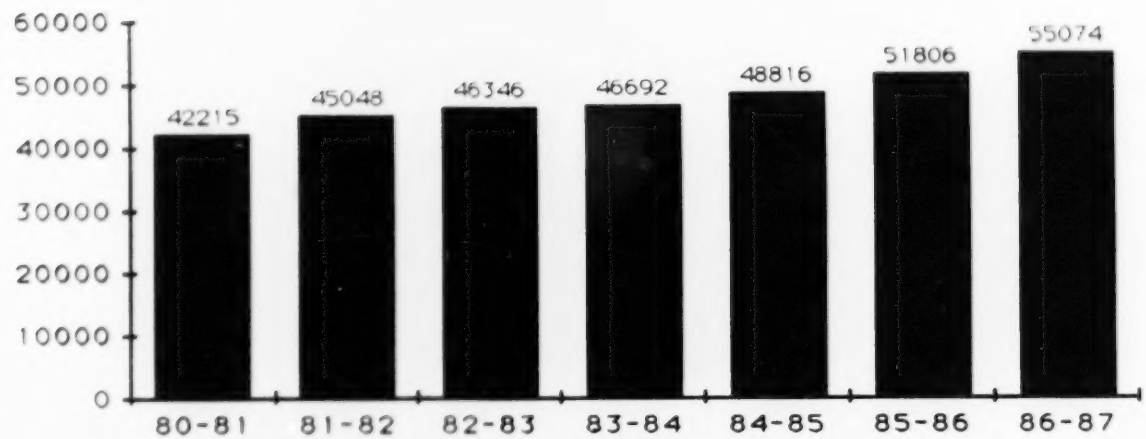


Table
2

MINORITY ENROLLMENT
BY RACE
80/81-86/87

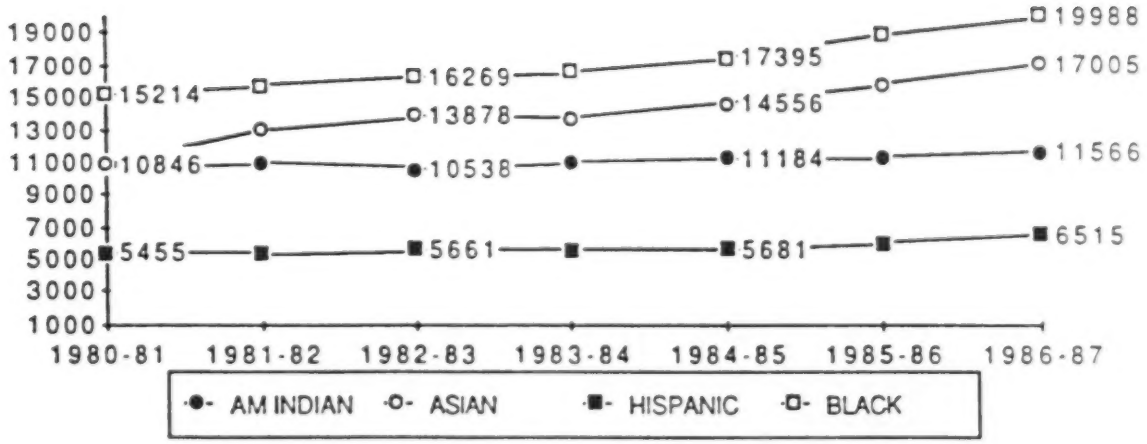


Table
3

MINNESOTA DROPOUT PERCENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY 1980-1986

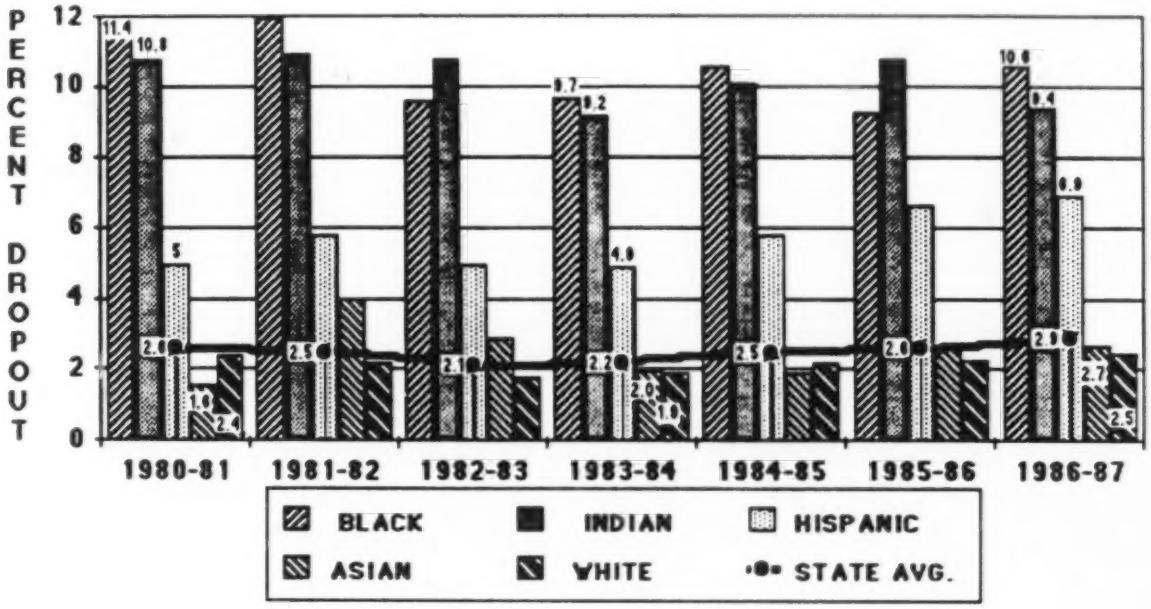
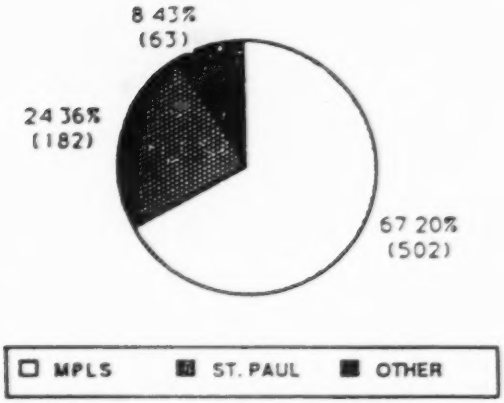
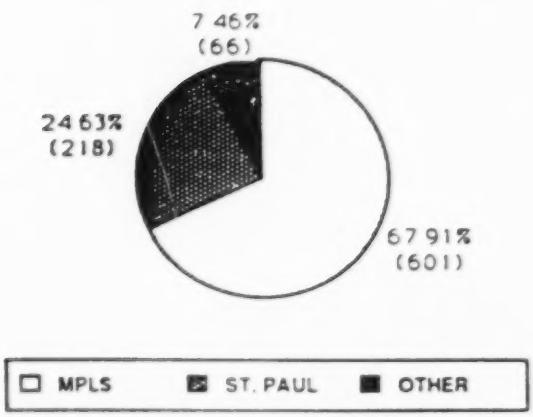


Table
4

85-86 BLACK DROPOUT
BY MAJOR DISTRICTS



86-87 BLACK DROPOUT
BY MAJOR DISTRICTS



7-12 BLACK ENROLLMENT 86-87

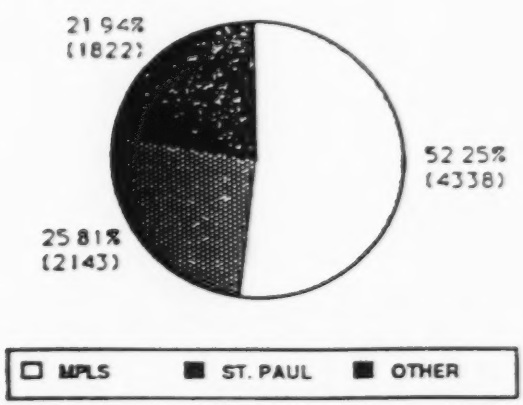
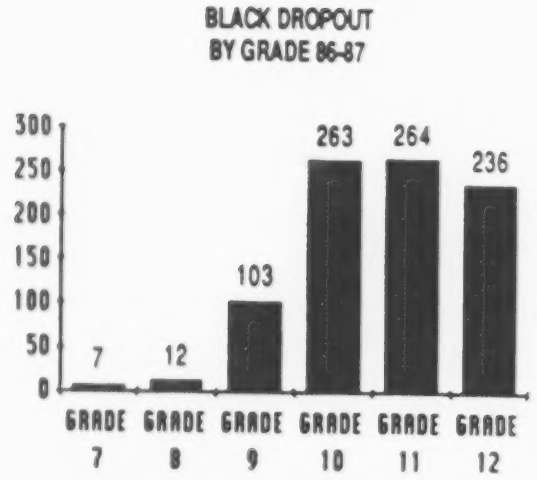
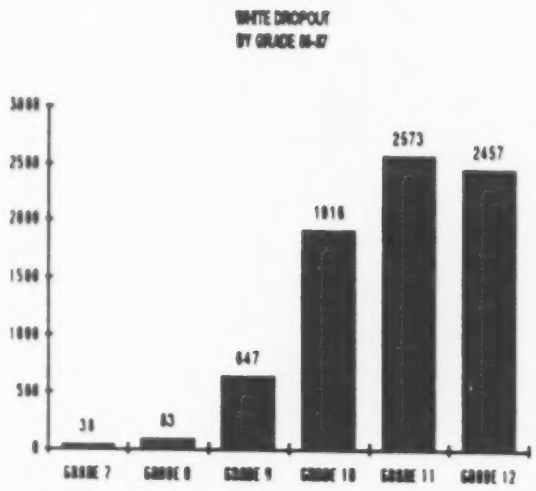


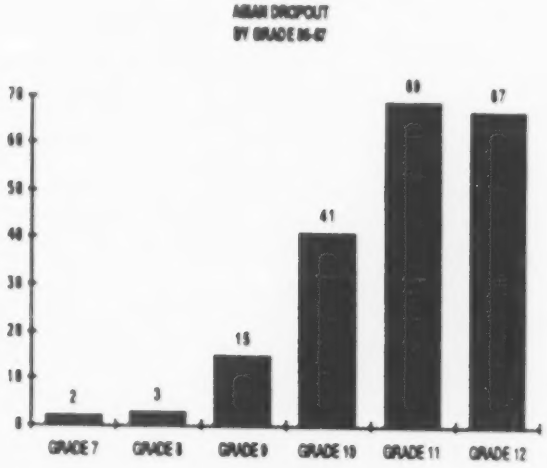
Table
5

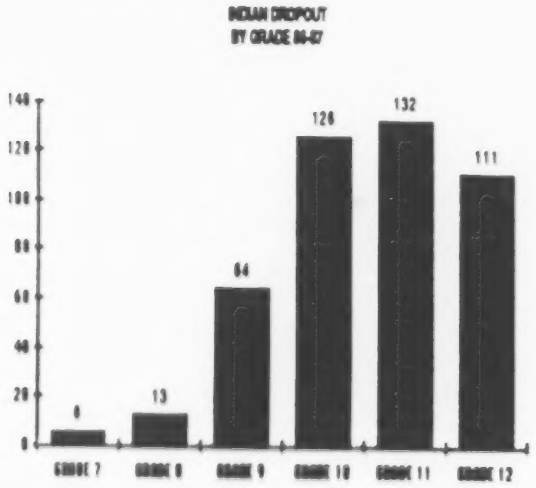
MINNESOTA STUDENT DROPOUT
BY GRADE 86-87

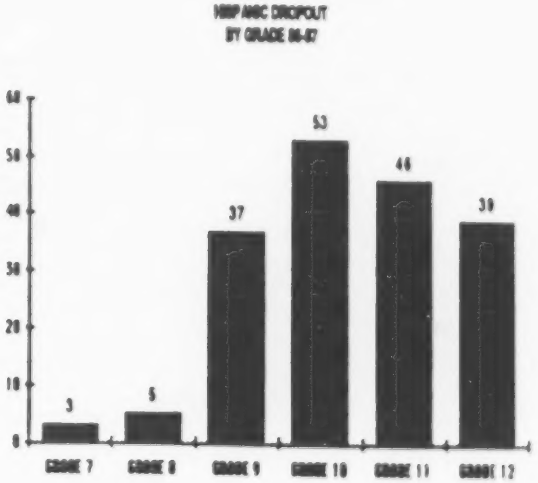
MINCRIS DATA











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